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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000117

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [EINV](#) [EFIN](#) [MO](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: MOROCCO ON THE SITUATION IN LEBANON

REF: A. STATE 10786

[1](#)B. RABAT 16

Classified by Polcouns Craig Karp for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) On February 5, Embassy conveyed reftel Note Verbale on the Lebanese political crisis to Mohammed Azeroual, MFA Director General for Multilateral Affairs and the Foreign Minister's point-man on Middle East and Islamic Affairs.

[1](#)2. (C) Responding in detail to the points in the Note Verbale, Hassan Hami, Office Director for Islamic and Arab Affairs, (speaking personally) told D/Polcouns that it was unlikely Morocco would make a bilateral contribution in support of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Hami stressed that Morocco's preference was to act within the Arab League or other multilateral frameworks. He said Morocco was fulfilling its pledge of economic support for the GOL presented at the Stockholm donors' conference.

[1](#)3. (C) Similarly Hami said he doubted Morocco would be able to provide, on a bilateral basis, assistance to the LAF or Lebanese Internal Security, adding that the Seniora Government, which Morocco supports, had not requested any such assistance at present.

[1](#)4. (C) Hami expressed regret that more had not been achieved at the recent Arab League session on Lebanon, recalling the Morocco supported Saudi Arabia's efforts to turn up the heat on Syria (ref B). He said that Morocco nonetheless believed that an open rupture among AL member states in Cairo would have been counterproductive. Hami stressed that the current crisis in Gaza and broader regional tensions weighed heavily on Morocco's calculus for Middle East policy. He candidly acknowledged that the GOM was keeping a wary eye on public opinion, inflamed by the perceived siege on Gaza, and was unlikely to move outside of Arab League positions in the current environment.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: Despite their generally forward leaning and constructive approach toward Arab-Middle East issues, the Gaza crisis is prompting the GOM to err on the side of caution. The situation in Gaza has impacted strongly on public opinion and has prompted local Islamists to stage protest demonstrations. We note that the opposition Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) is hosting in Rabat Feb. 7-8 an "Arab Political Parties Conference," a group in which the Syrian Baath have a leadership role, and according to reports Hizballah and Hamas will be represented at the meeting. End comment.

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